

Józef Sare (1850–1929)

Belonging to the generation of the turn of the 20th century, Józef Sare was a man who was instrumental in the creation of the ‘great Cracow’ through his knowledge, experience, work and will. He was known as the ‘father of the city,’ the ‘spirit of all municipal buildings,’ a ‘superb host,’ who as an architect, builder and deputy mayor was its rightful and noble citizen.

He was born into the Jewish family of Salomon and Daniela née Kleinberger on the 1st of September 1850 in Chorowice, in the Wielicki District, where his parents leased a tavern. Józef started his education in Cracow schools and lived in a tenement building belonging to the family at 27 Zwierzyniecka Street, which was to become his home for the whole of his life. Following on from the example of his father, a Cracow builder, in 1862 he entered the Technical Institute in Cracow, and after finishing it in 1867 went to Vienna to study and develop at the Viennese polytechnic and school of engineering (Ingenieur Schule). Having gained his diploma in 1869 he returned to Cracow, took up a construction work placement, worked on the laying of the railway line in Western Galicia (the railway line from Cracow to the Hungarian border). Then as an apprentice builder he started his public service in Tarnów in 1870. He was involved in the restoration and maintenance of government buildings in the town, the construction of a bridge over the Wisłoka River and the regulation of the banks of the Vistula River. Sare was also connected to

Tarnów through family ties, for in June 1874 he married Celina Krautzerówna (1854–1925), the daughter of a local doctor, with whom he had four children (Romuald, Hugo, Zenon and Eliza).

On the 15th of July 1872, after successfully passing his examination in civil, highway and waterway construction, he became a lecturer in construction and was transferred to Lvov District. He combined supervisory work on the construction of courts and prisons at the Technical Department of the *Namiestnictwo* in Lvov (from March 1875) with the building of the neo-classically designed Secondary School in Tarnów (later to be the secondary school on Copernicus Street). Already then he started to present himself as a social activist, something borne out by his membership (from 31st of March 1878) of the Lvov Polytechnic Society, the members of which in 1880 voted him onto the board and entrusted him with the post of assistant to the Society's secretary general.

A longing for Cracow meant that towards the end of 1880 Sare happily returned to the city and took up employment in the Technical Department of Cracow district government (from 1892 he was department head). One of his first tasks to which he was assigned as an inspector, was the construction of the Jagiellonian University's Collegium Novum, which was to be built from 1883 to 1887 on the site where the Cracow bishop Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki, had funded the Jerusalem Hall of residence for students from 1453–1456, which had burnt down during the night of the 25th and 26th of June 1841. Sare's excessive meticulousness led to differences with the head of the project and the designer of the neo-Gothic Collegium Novum, Feliks Księżarski (1820–1884), who demanded that Sare be sent back to the *Namiestnictwo* in Lvov. Thanks to the intervention of Kazimierz Badeni, Sare was able to stay in Cracow. On the request of the Jagiellonian University rector, Stanisław Tarnowski, Sare was involved in the organisation of the interior of Collegium Novum. And in continuing with design and building work he was responsible for the creation of many public sector buildings. The University in Cracow is in his debt for the surgery clinic at 40, Copernicus Street, the design of which Sare prepared himself for through extensive European travel (Vienna, Budapest, Heidelberg, Strasburg, Berlin), in order to be more aware of the arrangement of clinical departments. The result of his work was impressive, with Sare being awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Franz Joseph, while the clinic was considered to be one of the most modern constructions in not only Galicia but within the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire – into which a part of the Polish lands including Cracow had been incorporated following the partitions. Galician autonomy, as opposed to the Polish territories under Russia and Prussian partition, allowed for a relative cultural freedom, meaning that Cracow was able to develop despite foreign

occupation. In 1892–1893 Sare designed the building of the Department of Court Medicine of the Jagiellonian University's Collegium Medicum, located on 16 Grzegórzecka Street, and subsequently the buildings of the Medical Faculty on Copernicus Street: the Ophthalmological Clinic (work from 1897 to 1898), the Internal Diseases Clinic (finished in 1901) as well as the Neurological-Psychiatric Clinic (1913). In overseeing the construction of works for Cracow university Sare was to design the building for Collegium Agronomicum on Mickiewiczza Street 21 (1908); he jointly worked on (with G. Niewiadomski, S. Ciechanowski, E. Wekluk) the design for the technical Collegium Phisicum on 13 Gołębia Street, handed over for use on the 4th March 1912. He also worked on the initial design for the Veterinary Department, which came to fruition in 1914 on 18 Czysta Street.

Thanks to his design works, ones created in the spirit of true eclectic architecture, Nowodworski Collegium was to be rebuilt, the Real School came about (at present the Witkowski Grammar School on Studencka Street), as did the King Jan III Sobieski Secondary School on Sobieski Street, and the St. Anna Secondary School (at present the 1st B. Nowodworski Cracow Grammar School at the square of Na Groblach).

With commitment and care he guaranteed an appropriate interior during the renovation work of the Old Theatre, he oversaw the construction of the Main Post Office building, a home for neglected boys for the Aleksander Lubomirski Foundation, and from 1898 to 1903 the Cracow District Offices at 22 Basztowa Street.

In 1894 he was given the title of construction counsellor. As an expert in technical matters he cooperated with the municipal authorities, sat on architectonic competition juries (including those for the design of the Słowacki Theatre – 1889, the main building for the Academy of Mining and Metallurgy – 1913, the spatial development of Wolska and Błonia Street (1913–1914) as well as being on many construction commissions (The Plan for the Regulation of Greater Cracow, Plan 1909–1910, the construction of the headquarters for the Medical Society – 1905, the Zamek Restaurant on Wawel Hill 1907, 1909). He operated within the International Commission for the Regulation of the Vistula River, for which he received in May 1898 the Order of St. Stanislaus from Tsar Nicholas II.

In May 1902 he was chosen to be a city counsellor from amongst the intelligentsia, and was active in the workings of the economic commission, the gas and electricity, the investment, tram, water supply, sewage and water canal system commissions. He was involved in the modernisation of Cracow railway station, the extending of the tram network to Salwator, Łobzów and Podgórze, the regulation of the Wisła and Rudawa Rivers as well as the utilisation of the adjoining territories (the construction of walls and embank-

ments), he was instrumental in the building of a sewage works for the city (1907), took care of the renovation of St. Mary's Church (1913) and the Town Hall Tower (1914).

In all this multifaceted activity J. Sare was motivated by a concern for the well-being of the inhabitants of Cracow. The building of sporting facilities, playgrounds, the idea for the city to purchase Lasek Wolski (an area of forest) and the creation of a public park (1917) are proof of not only the pertinence of the urban investment but also the exceptional ability to plan a city conducive to habitation.

On the 28th of June 1905 J. Sare was elected deputy mayor of Cracow. This selection of a representative of the kahal Jews to the city presidium was indeed an event, one arousing the mistrust of clerical circles. Some even reproached Juliusz Leo, the then mayor, over the matter. Yet J. Sare was to quickly gain recognition as a conscientious, reliable, competent man who was committed to public service; he was to hold the post of deputy mayor uninterrupted for 24 years. Mayors came and went, political profiles changed, the composition of the presidium altered yet J. Sare's position remained unchanged. His professionalism combined with his personal qualities enabled him to ride through political strife, always turning out to be the best antidote to a crisis. He was known for his punctuality, dependability, sense of duty, and first and foremost his sensitiveness in the face of human injustice as well as his 'friendly approach to all in need of help, for whom the door to his office was always open.' (M. Rympel). He was not only responsible for beautifying the city and rebuilding it, but also for bestowing a far more human countenance on many a matter.

When on the 1st of July 1925, at City Council Hall, the 20th anniversary of his appointment as deputy mayor was being celebrated the arrival of J. Sare was met with a roar of loud, heartfelt applause from all those gathered, while the clearly moved Sare claimed, with his trademark modesty, that very moment was the happiest of his life. In 1926 he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of *Polonia Restituta*.

Valued both in Poland and abroad he was a member of the Cracow Technical Society (from 1880), acting among other things as treasurer (1884–1887), chairman (1889–1892), and from 1912 as an honorary member; he belonged to the Austrian Association of Engineers and Architects in Vienna (from 1886).

At the beginning of the 20th century J. Sare was a deputy for the State Parliament in Lvov, chosen from the Cracow Industrial and Retail Chamber in 1907 and in 1913 (unanimously). Following the outbreak of World War I, Sare, as a joint founder of the National Executive Committee (NKN) – formed on the 16th of August 1914, represented the Polish Democratic Front, with whom

he had been associated since his departure from conservative circles. In the October and November of 1914 he presided over the evacuation of the city, carrying out the responsibilities of the Mayor of Cracow (following the resignation of the first deputy mayor Henryk Szarski and given the absence of the mayor, Juliusz Leo, similarly after the death of Jan Kanty Federowicz (July 1924) as well as after the dismissal of the government commissioner Witold Ostrowski, and before the election of Karol Rolle in June 1926).

As deputy mayor of Cracow as well as a Polish Jew he most fervently protested against the wave of accusations which were directed in 1915 against Poles accused of alleged pogroms against the Jewish population. Antisemitism in pre-World War I Galicia was very weak. Zygmunt Lasocki recalls that during the war the nationalist movement led to a deterioration in Jewish relations with the Polish populace. Some Jews fuelled these moods of mutual aversion, accusing Poles of antisemitism. Józef Sare, together with Herman Felstein, protested against these completely imaginary accusations, which spoke of their loyalty and genuine objectivity in evaluating the situation.

After retiring from the District Office (27th August 1917) he was awarded the Commander's Cross of the Order of Franz Joseph, but he did not cease his involvement in public life, dedicating his time to social matters. Following the regaining of independence he involved himself in work to reconstruct the country. Taking advantage of the new possibilities for the development of industry he personally contributed to the creation of the consortium of the self-governing Galician Towns Quarry as well as the Jaworzno Communal Coal Mines SA.

He maintained contacts with Jewish society through his membership of Jewish associations, first and foremost as the first president of the State Committee for the Care of Jewish Orphans. In 1919 he became a member of the Executive Council for the Unification of Poles of the Mosaic faith of the Polish lands. He carried out numerous social obligations until the end of his life.

He died on the 23rd of March 1929 in Cracow, and was buried at the new Jewish cemetery on Miodowa Street. His funeral became a homage of sorts for the numerous Cracowians who came to pay their respects to their deputy mayor, a righteous man who never turned his back on his origins, and who performed his public duties well and for the good of all. An expression of gratitude was the renaming of Zielona Street in Cracow in his honour. A portrait of Józef Sare painted by Józef Mehoffer is to be found in the National Museum.

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